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PERSIAN EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION OF 2500 YEARS OF PERSIAN ART

BY
ESIN ATIL

FREER GALLERY OF ART

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1971

FREER GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D.C.

IMPERIAL EMBASSY OF IRAN

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

December 15, 1971

Dear Dr. Stern:

It is indeed fitting that the Freer Gallery of Art, by publishing this magnificent catalogue of selected pieces from its special exhibition of Persian Art, is playing a leading role in the United States Celebration of the 2500th Anniversary of the Founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great and the Declaration of Human Rights. This outstanding institution has long been known for its extensive and high quality Persian collection.

The exhibition of the Freer Gallery is in conjunction with the activities of the United States Committee whose Honorary Chairman is Mrs. Richard M. Nixon and whose General Chairman is Ralph E. Becker. As President of the Western Hemisphere committees, I congratulate the Freer Gallery on its scholarly publication and exhibition which will convey to the American people the flavor of our civilization.

Let this historic occasion reaffirm the great ties of friendship between our two peoples and be a time for us to rededicate our efforts to insure a world whose peoples are governed by the concepts of morality, tolerance and freedom set forth so many centuries ago by Cyrus the Great.

Sincerely,

Dr. A. Aslan Afshar

Dr. Harold P. Stern, Director
Freer Gallery of Art
12th and Jefferson Drive, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20560

FOREWORD

In 1976 the United States will celebrate its bicentennial anniversary, an event that our country will salute in the heartiest American tradition. Our two-hundred-year history is rather brief, however, when one considers that this year, 1971, Iran is celebrating the 2500th anniversary of its founding.

The Freer Gallery of Art is fortunate in possessing many treasures produced by the people of Iran throughout their long history. This catalogue of a special exhibition of Iranian art is dedicated to the culture of that land and to its people.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Iran-American Society for their assistance in the printing of this catalogue.

Freer Gallery of Art
November 1971

HAROLD P. STERN
Director

INTRODUCTION

The selection of objects for this exhibition was based on the representation of diverse provenances, types and techniques from the Achaemenid period (559-331 B.C.) to the Safavid dynasty (A.D. 1501-1732). The word *Persian* has been used in preference to *Iran* as it incorporates the arts from the regions which at the time belonged to the cultural entity of Persia but today fall outside the political boundaries of modern Iran.

The love for the object, devotion to aesthetic and technical perfection has always been the underlying theme of Persian art which has retained its inherent characteristics regardless of the conquests from the West, as the Greeks and the Muslim Arabs, and those from the East, as the Seljuks, Mongols and Timurids of Central Asia. The indigenous Persian style has absorbed the traditions of the newcomers, retaining its cultural heritage whether it is in the creation of a manuscript, metalwork, ceramics, or architectural structure.

ESIN ATIL
Assistant Curator
Near Eastern Art

THE ART OF THE BOOK

Calligraphy and Illumination

The creation of an Islamic book requires the joint efforts of renowned calligraphers, illuminators, miniaturists and book-binders of its period. Among these artists the most highly esteemed were without doubt the calligraphers as they were the very ones who copied the words of the Prophet Muhammad into the Korans and thus attained their exalted status.

The earliest Korans were written in a bold and angular script called *kufic* which later changed its character to become more slender and vertical (nos. 2 and 3). In time a rounder and cursive script evolved and developed into various styles of which *naskhi* and *thuluth* were popular (nos. 4, 5 and 8). In the beginning of the fifteenth century a special cursive script, *nastalik*, appeared, credited to Mir Ali of Tabriz, and became the most prized style of writing (no. 7 and the text of nos. 6, 19-22). Although secular works employed all styles of calligraphy, the Korans remained fairly conservative, generally written in *naskhi*.

There are many references and high praises to celebrated Persian calligraphers in historical and archival documents. Among the famous scribes were Mir Ali of Herat (nos. 26 and 30), Sultan Muhammad Nur who worked in the Safavid court (nos. 26 and 36), Muhammad Kasim (no. 26), Shaykh Mahmud (no. 26), Shaykh Muhammad (no. 32) and Murshid al-Katib al-Shirazi (no. 33). At times the work of several calligraphers were combined in the preparation of a single manuscript (no. 26 and 39). It is significant that the names of the copyists appear on the colophons of the manuscripts although those of the miniaturists are omitted. Calligraphy itself was considered an art form and samples of exquisite writing were often incorporated into albums to be appreciated and contemplated for their own beauty.

Since traditionally religious art was devoid of figural representations, the Korans were adorned with rich illuminations appearing on the frontispieces and chapter headings, and sometimes on each and every page. Beginning with floral and geometric motifs (no. 1) the illuminations eventually became most intricate and refined, utilizing the unique creation of the Islamic world, the arabesque. The frontispieces, whether for religious or secular manuscripts, were given special attention and extremely delicate arabesques, either in medallions or on full pages broken into rectangular units, were incorporated with fine examples of calligraphy to enhance the opening leaves of the book (nos. 4 and 8).

The margins of the text were at times decorated with drawings, either in gold or in soft tints, the earliest of which appears on the *Diwan* of Sultan Ahmad Jalair (no. 7).

1. Pair of Illuminated Pages from a Koran 34.25-34.26

Gold on parchment

10th century, 16.5 x 11.5 cm. ($6\frac{1}{2}$ x $4\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

These pages belong to a fragment of a Koran written in *kufic*. One of the earliest examples of Islamic illumination, the double leaves are composed of intersecting bands filled with geometric and floral motifs. The large palmette extending into the margin is reminiscent of Sasanian motifs.

2. Page from a Koran 37.34

Kufic script on paper

Late 10th century, 24.0 x 34.0 cm. ($9\frac{1}{2}$ x $13\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

Pertaining to Chapter 55 from a Samanid Koran, the leaf is written in dark brown *kufic* with the diacritics given in red, brown, and blue while gold rosettes indicate the verse-stops. This particular style of calligraphy, called "Early Badi," developed in Persia in the tenth century and coincides with the first usage of paper in manuscript production.

3. Page from a Koran 39.56

Kufic script on paper

Seljuk period, 12th century, 32.3 x 21.4 cm. ($12\frac{3}{4}$ x $8\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

By the twelfth century a change in *kufic* script occurs in which the letters become slender and more vertical as is apparent here. The background of the folio is filled with floral arabesques and scrolls executed in soft tones, contrasting with the bold script.

4. Illuminated Frontispiece 40.19

Naskhi script on paper

14th century, 27.6 x 21.4 cm. ($10\frac{7}{8}$ x $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

The frontispiece from an unidentified work is adorned with gold flowers against dark-blue and green grounds with a gold field enclosing the white script. The naturalistic tendency in the representation of the blossoms points to a Far Eastern influence which appears at this time.

5. Illuminated Page from a Koran 32.60

Thuluth script on paper

14th century, 36.9 x 26.7 cm. ($14\frac{1}{2}$ x $10\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Black script in the center, surrounded by an ornamental field, is from a section of Chapter 29. Two title vignettes referring to the Koran are placed in the car-

touches above and below, written in white against a floral ground. As seen in the previous frontispiece, geometric braids frame the separate units.

6. Illuminated Medallion 31.37

From the *Khosrow u Shirin* of Nizami

Jalairid period, Tabriz, early 15th century, 18.3 x 12.7 cm. (7¼ x 5 in.)

Belonging to the same manuscript as miniatures nos. 19-22, the decorative medallion is used as a frontispiece. The text is written in *nastalik* by Ali b. Hasan al-Sultani, a calligrapher who was most likely in the service of Sultan Ahmad Jalair.

7. Two Pages from the Diwan of Sultan Ahmad Jalair 32.34-32.35

Nastalik script with marginal drawings on paper

Jalairid period, Tabriz, early 15th century, each 29.5 x 20.2 cm. (11½ x 8 in.)

The collection of the poems of Sultan Ahmad Jalair includes eight pages with slightly tinted marginal drawings depicting scenes of nomadic life. The incorporation of narrative scenes with figures into the margins indicates a new genre in manuscript decoration. The text of the *Diwan* is attributed to Mir Ali of Tabriz who is believed to have invented this style of writing.

8. Illuminated Pages from a Koran 32.67-32.68

Naskhi script on paper

Safavid period, 16th century, each 42.0 x 27.3 cm. (16½ x 10¾ in.)

This Koran, containing 286 folios with marginal ornaments, represents one of the most decorative manuscripts from the sixteenth century with rich illuminations on its frontispiece, double folios of the opening chapter, and on the chapter headings. These two folios, painted in gold, dark and light blue, pink, and red, are written in white script and appear at the beginning of the first chapter, al-Fatihah.

Fourteenth-Century Miniatures

Although the first Islamic manuscript illustrations appear under the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, it was in Persia following the Mongol conquest that miniatures attained their highest level. The Ilkhanids, a branch of the Mongols who settled in the Near East, brought with them the traditions of the Far East and, integrating these with the already existing themes, helped to create a unique style which in essence is Islamic but inspired by Chinese motifs and techniques, especially noticeable in landscape features.

The Ilkhanids chose Azerbaijan as the seat of their court and Tabriz became the center of artistic and scholarly activities. Another city, Shiraz, ruled by the Inju dynasty, was also prolific in manuscript production and reveals a style which is more provincial, continuing to some extent the Baghdad school with

relatively simple compositions and bold colors. This school produced the earliest and extensively illustrated Persian translation of the *Universal History* of al-Tabari (no. 9) and the popular epic of Firdausi, the *Shahnameh* (no. 10).

The developing phase of Persian painting occurs in the first half of the fourteenth century, patronized by the Ilkhanids. Several historical and scientific manuscripts were executed during their reign, including the *Jami al-Tawarikh*, the history of the world by Rashid al-Din, the illustrious grand vizier, and ibn Bakhtishu's *Manafi al-Hayawan* based on the description of animals (no. 11).

A significant group of paintings from this period is several copies of Firdausi's work, frequently referred to as the small *Shahnamehs*. The differentiation of schools of painting is difficult to establish but aside from their small size, they all share certain common features such as refined drawing and advanced iconography, determining the evolution of Persian miniature painting (nos. 12-14).

The most spectacular work from the early fourteenth century is the dispersed "Demotte" *Shahnameh* whose extensive paintings show several hands and styles. In contrast to the other Ilkhanid *Shahnamehs*, the miniatures are monumental and outstanding in their psychological and dramatic impact. Due to its unique imagery and style, the date and province of this manuscript is still controversial and remains to this day as one of the most intriguing of all Persian works of art (nos. 15-18).

9. *The Election of Othman to the Caliphate* 30.21

From the *Universal History* of al-Tabari

Inju period, Shiraz, early 14th century, 09.4 x 17.3 cm. (3¾ x 6¾ in.)

About 50 years after al-Tabari wrote his history in A.D. 921 the work was translated into Persian by Balami. The collection contains two volumes of the Persian translation, the first of which is in 193 folios with 30 miniatures and deals with the Old Testament and early Persian and Arabic histories. The second volume with 207 folios and 8 miniatures continues through the Abbasid Caliphate. The painting exhibited represents an episode from the second volume in which Ali and Othman are brought before the arbiter prior to Othman's taking the vows and being proclaimed as the Caliph.

10. *Kai Khosrow Crossing the Sea* 42.12

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Inju period, Shiraz, dated 1341, 13.3 x 24.1 cm. (5¼ x 9½ in.)

Belonging to a group of seven miniatures from a dated *Shahnameh*, this image

is typical of the Inju school with its red and gold background and provincial style of painting. The manuscript was originally written for Kawan al-Din Hasan, a vizier in Fars.

11. *Two Herons* 27.5

From the *Manafi al-Hayawan* of ibn Bakhtishu

Ilkhanid period, early 14th century, 12.0 x 12.8 cm. ($4\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 in.)

This image is a part of a series of six leaves from the Persian translation of ibn Bakhtishu's Arabic work which was written in the eleventh century. The text accompanying the miniature describes the nature and usefulness of the herons. The painting reflects Far Eastern influences which is one of the characteristics of the period.

12. *Piran Prevents the Execution of Bihzan* 45.26

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, first half of 14th century, 04.8 x 12.0 cm. ($1\frac{7}{8}$ x $4\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

Bihzan, the Iranian, captured by the Turanians, is ready to be hung at the foot of the gibbet when Piran approaches on horseback and saves him. This image and six other miniatures are from one of the small *Shahnamehs* in the collection.

13. *An Old Astrologer Greets Khosrow Parwiz at the Door of His Hermitage* 45.21

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, first half of 14th century, 05.9 x 12.0 cm. ($2\frac{3}{8}$ x $4\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

Representing an episode from the life of Khosrow Parwiz, this miniature belongs to the same manuscript as no. 12. Its unique composition incorporates landscape and architectural elements to enhance the narrative.

14. *Siyawush Taken Prisoner by Afrasiab* 31.21

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, early 14th century, 04.8 x 12.0 cm. ($1\frac{7}{8}$ x $4\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

Part of another small *Shahnameh* of which there are four paintings in the collection, the main feature here is the story enacted by the figures. The essential characters are depicted as a frieze on a single plane without any suggestion of the setting.

15. *Alexander the Great at the Talking Tree* 35.23

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, Tabriz, early 14th century, 24.2 x 28.5 cm. ($9\frac{1}{2}$ x $11\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

This image and the following three are from the monumental manuscript commonly called the "Demotte" *Shahnameh*. Although over 50 images are presently known, the original manuscript must have been far more extensive. Iskender

(Alexander the Great) is represented here by the talking tree which tells him that he will die in a foreign land. The twisted trunks of the tree, receding planes, and carefully rendered landscape elements indicate an interest in the setting of the images which will be predominant in ensuing Persian miniatures.

16. *The Bier of Alexander the Great* 38.3

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, Tabriz, early 14th century, 25.0 x 28.0 cm. (9 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 in.)

One of the most dramatic scenes in Persian painting is the mourning of Iskender's death with his coffin surrounded by Aristotle, his mother, and subjects. The pathos of death is remarkably rendered with the color palette, gestures and facial expressions of the figures heightening the emotional impact.

17. *Nushirwan Rewards His Minister Buzurjmihir* 42.2

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, Tabriz, early 14th century, 18.5 x 19.6 cm. (7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The scene in which Shah Nushirwan rewards his minister for his wisdom with bags of gold, the diagonal tree cutting across the picture gives a definitive sense of recession.

18. *Bahram Gur in the Treasure Vault of Jamshid* 35.24

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

Ilkhanid period, Tabriz, early 14th century, 20.8 x 28.8 cm. (8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

An episode in the *Shahnameh* describes how Bahram Gur discovers the treasury of Jamshid in an underground vault, filled with great quantities of jewels and gold figures of animals. In the center of the vault was a trough of gold containing emeralds and rubies, as depicted in the painting.

Fifteenth-Century Miniatures

It is in the fifteenth century that the stylistic and iconographical characteristics of Persian miniatures become firmly implanted. This was a period of immense manuscript productivity with the appearance of recognizable schools of painting. The Timurids, who arrived in the Near East at the end of the fourteenth century, established their court in Herat where the greatest creative personages assembled. Under the patronage of Timur's son and successor, Shah Rukh (1404-47), an academy of painting was founded with the most celebrated calligraphers, miniaturists, and bookbinders working for the royal libraries. Other members of the ruling dynasty, such as Iskender Sultan, Ibrahim Sultan and Baysungur Mirza, encouraged and sponsored artistic activities in

the provinces where they served as governors.

In this period more attention was given to mystic and lyrical works of the Persian poets although the *Shahnameh* and other historic texts continued to be illustrated. The *Khamseh* of Nizami (1140-1203), a collection of five poems including the *Mahzan al-Asrar* (Treasury of Mysteries), *Khosrow u Shirin*, *Laila u Majnun*, *Haft Paykar* (Seven Portraits), and *Iskendernameh* (Book of Alexander the Great); and the *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) and *Bustan* (Fruit Garden) of Sadi (1182-1292) became very popular.

The beginning of classical Persian painting actually predates the Timurids, appearing in Tabriz at the turn of the century under the Jalairids who succeeded the Ilkhanids in the northwestern provinces of Persia and in Azerbaijan. One remarkable ruler, Sultan Ahmad Jalair (1382-1410) stands out as the most enthusiastic patron of the arts. During his reign Persian painting reveals its early stages of brilliance as observed in the *Khosrow u Shirin* of Nizami (nos. 19-22). In this group of miniatures the great interest in landscapes represented as fantastic gardens, meticulously detailed architectural settings, and the internal involvement of figures make their appearance, setting the standard for future Persian paintings.

Although Herat was the administrative and cultural capital of the Timurids, it was by no means the only artistic center. Manuscripts were produced in other cities, especially in Shiraz which was first ruled by the Timurid princes and then by the Turkman tribes who gained control in the middle of the fifteenth century. The Turkman style is distinctive with its stocky figure types and stylized landscapes (no. 33).

The height of Timurid painting occurs at the end of the fifteenth century in Herat. At the court of the last Sultan, Husayin Mirza (1468-1506), the most famous figures of the Islamic world were gathered, including the poet Jami, administrator and writer Ali Shir Newai, historians Mirkhawand and Khwandamir, and the renowned painter Behzad. In the late Herat school landscapes become more naturalistic, figures show differentiation of types, almost realistic and individualized, and the range of composition and color are infinitely varied, achieving the ultimate in technical perfection.

19. *Khosrow Sees Shirin Bathing* 31.32

From the *Khosrow u Shirin* of Nizami

Jalairid period, Tabriz, early 15th century, 16.3 x 15.3 cm. (6½ x 6 in.)

The complete manuscript of the *Khosrow u Shirin* contains 63 folios with 5 miniatures which show a most refined style, linking the late Ilkhanid painting with that of Timurid. Set within a lush landscape, Khosrow catches sight of Shirin bathing in a pool while her horse, Shabdiz, whose whining alerts her, stands behind the rocks.

20. *The Sculptor Farhad Brought before Shirin* 31.34
 From the *Khosrow u Shirin* of Nizami
 Jalairid period, Tabriz, early 15th century, 27.3 x 16.5 cm. ($10\frac{3}{4}$ x $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Shapur introduces the sculptor Farhad to Shirin who receives him in her magnificent chamber, accompanied by her ladies. The obvious embarrassment of Farhad, who according to the text became "as one blind and numb" when faced with his beloved, is portrayed with great sensitivity.

21. *Shirin Visits the Sculptor Farhad* 31.35
 From the *Khosrow u Shirin* of Nizami
 Jalairid period, Tabriz, early 15th century, 26.1 x 17.6 cm. ($10\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 in.)

Shah Khosrow tells Farhad to cut a road through the mountain Bisutun in order to win Shirin's hand. With great expectations Farhad has carved a relief whose upper portion shows Khosrow uniting the hands of Shirin and himself. During his work, Shirin visits him attended by a servant.

22. *Khosrow at Shirin's Castle* 31.36
 From the *Khosrow u Shirin* of Nizami
 Jalairid period, Tabriz, early 15th century, 25.7 x 18.4 cm. ($10\frac{1}{8}$ x $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

The last image in the manuscript depicts the final reunion of the two lovers. One of the most exquisite miniatures of the period, it shows Khosrow approaching the castle in a suppliant manner, having displeased Shirin. He is received with honors as indicated by the textiles strewn on his path and servants offering him delicacies.

23. *Shah Kaus and Kai Khosrow Approach the Sacred Fire* 40.20
 From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi
 Turkman period, Shiraz, late 15th century, 09.5 x 16.0 cm. ($3\frac{3}{4}$ x $6\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

This miniature is from a manuscript written by Murshid b. Izz al-Din Wazan, completed in 1482. The Turkman style of Shiraz is characterized by a bold palette, stocky figures with gold embroidery on their garments, hills filled with flowers and tufts of grass, and the horizon outlined by rocky formations.

24. *Abduction by Sea* 37.27
 From the *Hasht Behist* of Amir Khosrow Dihlawi
 Timurid period, Herat, late 15th century, 27.0 x 19.3 cm. ($10\frac{5}{8}$ x $7\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

The *Hasht Behist* (Eight Paradises) includes the story of a traveller who falls

in love with a queen and abducts her in a boat while her unsuspecting husband watches on shore. The painting typifies the style of the late Herat school with its rich color, individualization of figures, and naturalistic landscape setting.

25. *Prophets Elias and Khadir at the Fountain of Life* 37.24

From the *Iskendernameh* of Nizami

Timurid period, Herat, late 15th century, 15.7 x 13.4 cm. (6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

A section in the Book of Alexander the Great narrates the hero's search for the fountain of life. The fountain is accidentally discovered by two prophets, Elias and Khadir, when their dried fish comes to life as they prepare for a meal by a spring.

Sixteenth-Century Miniatures

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Timurid dynasty was overthrown by the Uzbeks who captured Herat in 1507 and carried off many of the local artists to their court in Bukhara. Shah Ismail (1501-24), the founder of the Safavid Empire, conquered Shiraz in 1503 and soon after took Herat from the Uzbeks, incorporating it into his realm. The capital of the Safavids was Tabriz until 1548 when it was moved to Kazwin due to the threat of the Ottomans, and finally to Isfahan under Shah Abbas (1587-1627) where it remained to the eighteenth century. The painting tradition of Persia, united under a single dynasty, began to reveal uniform features.

Both the Uzbeks and Safavids patronized the arts and the early paintings from Bukhara and Tabriz reflect the late Timurid style. Behzad is known to have been employed in the royal library at Tabriz under Shah Ismail and the Herat traditions continued there, perhaps initially the only distinction being the appearance of the Safavid turban with a red baton rising from the top.

The Safavid manuscripts executed in Herat in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, as the *Anthology* (no. 26) and the *Diwan* of Hafiz (no. 36), generally follow the elements and themes which were fully developed under the last Timurids. A similar tradition is seen in the contemporary Bukhara works as in the *Mihr u Mushtari* of Assar (nos. 28 and 29) and in the *Haft Manzar* of Hatifi (no. 30). Shiraz, although never the seat of the court, was an important painting center, and by the middle of the sixteenth century produced works which at times equalled the artistic achievements of both Herat and Tabriz (nos. 33-35).

Under the Safavids a particular genre, that of album painting, was very popular and became one of the most characteristic features of the painting of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Individual drawings, paintings, and samples of calligraphy were bound

into books to be enjoyed for their own intrinsic values. In Isfahan one painter, Aqa Riza, brought forth a new figural style in which a fluid line suggesting volume, naturalistic proportions and relaxed poses were utilized (no. 31). This style was elaborated by the famous Riza-i Abbasi and his school in the following century.

Although illustrations of well-known texts appear less frequently, singular manuscripts were produced, the richest of which is the *Haft Awrang* of Jami, executed by several calligraphers in Meshhed, Kazwin, and Herat (no. 39). The painters of the images are not identified but reveal a development of the royal Tabriz style with very elaborate and crowded compositions. This manuscript is perhaps the most spectacular and the last great heritage of the Persian miniature tradition.

- 26. *Old Man and Youth in Landscape*** 44.48
 Frontispiece from an *Anthology* dated 1524
 Signed by Behzad
 Herat, early 16th century, diam. 08.2 cm. (3¼ in.)

The manuscript, a compendium of selected works of Persian poets, was written for Vizier Khaja Malik Ahmad of Herat, a minister of Shah Ismail. Its text was copied by such famous calligraphers of the period as Mir Ali, Sultan Muhammad Nur, Muhammad Kasim and Shaykh Mahmud. The circular miniature, mounted as the frontispiece and bearing Behzad's signature, is one of the few paintings definitely assigned to the hand of this celebrated painter.

- 27. *A Youth Reading*** 31.14
 Bukhara, second half of 16th century, 18.2 x 09.8 cm. (7⅛ x 3⅞ in.)

This single image executed for an album shows clouds, trees, and blossoms drawn in gold on a pale blue ground against which the youthful figure is placed. The particular turban, garments, and the pose of the figure are typical of the Bukhara school.

- 28. *Prince Mihr at School*** 32.5
 From the *Mihr u Mushtari* of Assar
 Bukhara, dated 1523, 19.7 x 11.6 cm. (7¾ x 4½ in.)

The complete manuscript of Assar's work on the allegorical love between the Sultan's son, Mihr (the Sun), and that of his vizier's, Mushtari (Jupiter), was copied by Ibrahim Khalil and contains 202 folios with 4 miniatures which reveal the continuation of the late Herat style in Bukhara. This scene represents the education of the two boys in a *madrasah* (a theological school).

- 29. *The Marriage of Mihr and Nahid*** 32.8
 From the *Mihr u Mushtari* of Assar
 Bukhara, dated 1523, 19.3 x 12.2 cm. (7⅝ x 4¾ in.)

Another miniature from the above manuscript describes the nuptial of Mihr, who, after being separated from Mushtari, marries the daughter of Kaywan (Saturn).

30. *Couple Entertained in a Pavilion* 56.14, fol. 22b

From the *Haft Manzar* of Hatifi

Bukhara, dated 1538, 25.9 x 16.2 cm. (10¼ x 6⅜ in.)

The dated volume of the *Haft Manzar* (Seven Thrones) containing 106 folios was copied by Mir Ali of Herat with its 4 miniatures attributed to Shaykhzadeh Musawwir, a pupil of Behzad captured by the Uzbeks. The manuscript is dedicated to Sultan Abd al-Aziz Bahadur, the reigning prince in Bukhara. The highly elaborate and meticulous rendering of details exemplify the early style of this school.

31. *Lady with a Fan* 32.9

Signed by Aqa Riza

Isfahan, late 16th century, 16.1 x 09.8 cm. (6⅜ x 3⅞ in.)

Aqa Riza is credited with the innovation of a new trend in Persian figural painting which is characterized by the full and rounded body with naturalistic proportions, use of calligraphic line suggesting volume, and a languid pose.

32. *Camel and Keeper* 37.21

Signed by Shaykh Muhammad

Tabriz (?), dated 1556-57, 10.9 x 13.2 cm. (4¼ x 5¼ in.)

A poem about a camel and his owner appears around the image together with the date and the name of the artist. This miniature with its rich detail and fine technique is the only signed work of the painter and calligrapher Shaykh Muhammad, who is said to have worked in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century either in Shiraz or in Tabriz.

33. *Bahram Gur Visits the Byzantine Princess in the White Pavillion on Friday*
08.277

From the *Khamseh* of Nizami

Shiraz, dated 1548, 18.7 x 13.6 cm. (7⅜ x 5⅜ in.)

The complete volume of the collection of Nizami's five poems, containing 402 folios and 25 miniatures, was copied by Murshid al-Katib al-Shirazi who was active in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The miniature exhibited is from the fourth poem, the *Haft Payker* or *Bahramnameh*, devoted to the adventures of Bahram Gur with the seven princesses he installs in separate pavillions symbolizing the progress of the soul through seven stages combined with seven days, their appropriate color, planet, clime and country. Each image representing a single princess is rendered in the varying tones of its symbolic color.

34. *Alexander the Great Approaches the Circle of Philosophers* 08.283

From the *Khamseh* of Nizami

Shiraz, dated 1548, 16.9 x 14.7 cm. ($6\frac{5}{8}$ x $5\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

In the fifth poem, the *Iskendernameh*, Nizami relates the conquests of the hero followed by his activities as a sage and prophet which began with his meeting the Seven Wise Men of Greece (Aristotle, Apollonius of Tyana, Socrates, Plato, Thales, Porphyrius and Hermes). In this painting Iskender approaches the philosophers and their students who are seated around Plato and having a most animated discussion.

35. *Alexander the Great Sees the Water Nymphs* 08.284

From the *Khamseh* of Nizami

Shiraz, dated 1548, 19.1 x 14.6 ($7\frac{1}{2}$ x $5\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The last scene of the *Khamseh* depicts Alexander watching the water nymphs or sirens who play in the water. The nymphs are represented in two types: long-haired ones and their darker short-haired companions.

36. *Sufis Dancing on a Terrace* 32.54

From the *Diwan* of Hafiz

Herat, dated 1523, 18.1 x 10.3 cm. ($7\frac{1}{8}$ x $4\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

This manuscript with 75 folios and 7 miniatures, copied in Herat by Sultan Muhammad Nur, contains selections from the *Diwan* of Hafiz with the works of other poets inserted into the margins. The dance of the sufis in which the dervishes whirl themselves into a state of ecstasy as a part of their ritual, is derived from similar themes seen in Herat at the end of the fifteenth century, notably by the school of Behzad.

37. *Winter Scene with Sufi and Courtier* 46.13

Mid-16th century, 19.6 x 13.5 cm. ($7\frac{3}{4}$ x $5\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

The representation of the coldness of winter and death, symbolized by the falling snow, barren trees, freezing birds and crumbling tombs, gives an atmosphere unique in Persian miniatures. The use of browns and grays aids in enhancing the feeling of mysticism and expressionism rarely achieved in Islamic art.

38. *Portrait of a Prince* 37.8

Signed by Muhammad Harawi

Tabriz or Herat, mid-16th century, 19.5 x 10.5 cm. ($7\frac{5}{8}$ x $4\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

The elaborate embroidery on the coat of the figure, depicting warriors with prisoners, is similar to designs seen on sixteenth-century Persian textiles. The painter is difficult to identify as there were several artists with the name Muhammad working at the time. Harawi indicates that he was from Herat, possibly a follower of the famous Muhammadi of Tabriz who spent his later years in Herat.

39. *Zulaykha Arrives in Egypt* 46.12, fol. 100b
 From the *Haft Awrang* of Jami
 Meshhed, Kazwin, and Herat, dated 1556-65, 34.2 x 23.2 cm. (13½ x 9¼ in.)

The *Haft Awrang* (Seven Thrones) was written for Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, a nephew of Shah Tahmasp, by five calligraphers in Meshhed, Kazwin, and Herat. Consisting of 303 folios and 28 miniatures, it marks the end of the great illustrated manuscript tradition of Persia. The image from the second poem, *Yusuf and Zulaykha*, shows a series of vignettes placed around the central theme, producing a rich and varied composition.

METALWORK

The history of Persian metalwork has a long indigenous past, going as far back as the fourth millenium B.C. The art of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great (559-530 B.C.), is characterized by the impressive reliefs at Persepolis which reveal a combination of realism and stylization. This tradition is also observed in contemporary metalwork, especially in the depiction of animals which have always been a favorite Persian theme (no. 40).

Following the victory of Alexander the Great over the Achaemenids in 331 B.C. Hellenism begins to make a noticeable appearance in the East. The incorporation of the classical style with local traditions is characteristic of the art of the Parthians who took over the remnants of the Greek rule in Persia about the middle of the third century B.C. (nos. 41 and 42).

The Sasanians, a local dynasty which replaced the Parthians in A.D. 224, left behind a wealth of silver objects, enabling us to determine certain technical and iconographical features of the period. A unique aspect of Sasanian metalwork is the representation of the kings wearing their individual crowns which, upon comparison with those on coins, often leads to their identification. Crowned rulers appear in portrait busts (no. 44) as well as on the numerous silver plates which depict the royal hunt (no. 51). Another characteristic of Sasanian metalwork is the mixture of Zoroastrian and Dionysiac themes seen both on plates and vases (nos. 48-50).

Islam, which overran Persia in A.D. 651 inherited certain themes and techniques from the Sasanians. The earliest datable Islamic metalwork belongs to the Buyids (933-1055), a dynasty ruling in western Persia and excelling in goldwork (nos. 52 and 56). After the arrival of the Seljuks in the Near East, decorating

by means of chasing seen in earlier Islamic metalwork (eg., nos. 52, 55 and 57) is gradually abandoned. Chasing is replaced by inlaying bronze and brass objects with silver, gold and copper, becoming the most distinctive technique from the middle of the twelfth century onward.

Silver inlaid ewers, basins, caskets, pen-boxes, bowls, goblets, candlesticks etc., depicting scenes of princely entertainment, astrological symbols, a wide repertoire of animals, and at times Christian inspired scenes or mere inscriptions are frequently encountered in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These objects with intricately decorated arabesques forming the backgrounds of the main elements, reveal the height of the technical abilities of the Persian artists. This technique of decoration which in the past influenced the West, as seen in sixteenth-century Venetian objects (no. 62), continues even today.

40. *Pair of Wild Goats* 64.6 and 63.15

Gold

Achaemenid period, 5th century B.C., height 19.6 cm. (7¾ in.)

These two animals once formed the handles of a now lost amphora-shaped vase, similar to those carried by the gift bearers on the Apadana reliefs in Persepolis. The row of fine wiring around the waists of the wild goats is also found on other gold work of the period.

41. *Head of a Lady* 66.24 (cover)

Silver

Parthian period, 1st century B.C.-1st century A.D., height 33.7 cm. (13¼ in.)

This bust, executed in archaic Greek style, is unique; no specimens of silver sculpture is known to come from the classical world. Although stylistically it appears to be as early as the fifth century B.C., certain details such as the mouth, cheeks and profile suggest a later date and raise the possibility of its having been made in a region influenced by Hellenism.

42. *Heart-shaped Ornament* 61.22

Gold

Parthian period, 3rd-1st century B.C., height 05.0 cm. (2 in.)

The naturalism of the two boars combined with large leaves indicates close contact with the West and enables the ornament to be dated to the Parthian period rather than to the Achaemenid or Sasanian periods during which animals were more stylized. The ornament was most likely part of a belt buckle.

43. *Bowl or Boss* 45.33

Silver, originally partially gilded and nielloed

Bactrian, 1st century B.C.-1st century A.D., diam. 19.1 cm. ($7\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Decorated with scenes pertaining to the dramas of Euripides, this piece represents identifiable episodes from specific plays as well as single figures of heroes with their most characteristic attributes. The stylization of drapery, Persian trousers, and the hierarchic eagle in the center suggest the piece may have been made in Bactria, a province where the impact of Hellenism was prominent.

44. *Bust of a King* 66.23

Silver, partially gilded

Sasanian period, mid-6th century, height 32.5 cm. ($12\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The identification of Sasanian kings is based on the coinage in which each ruler is depicted wearing his specific crown. The crown on this bust is not identical with any of those known on coins but appears to be closest to that of Khosrow I (A.D. 531-578).

45. *Bowl with a Portrait Medallion* 57.20

Silver, center gilded

Sasanian period, 3rd century, diam. 21.0 cm. ($8\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

The profile facing right and the style of beard and hair identify this piece as Sasanian. Prototypes for the fluting on the bowl and the leaves from which the bust rises can be found in the Parthian period.

46. *Bottle-stand with Eagles* 53.92

Silver

Sasanian or early Islamic, diam. 17.8 cm. (7 in.)

Eagles supporting thrones appear in Sasanian fire temples and rock reliefs as well as on metalwork. Ring stands such as this were probably used to hold ovoid-shaped vessels, as far back as Luristan. The object may also be early Islamic, belonging to that problematic period in Persia following the fall of the Sasanian Empire.

47. *Vase* 64.3

Silver, partially gilded

Sasanian period, 6th-7th century, height 17.5 cm. ($6\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

The gilding of the recessed areas between the large leaves on the body produces an ambiguity in design, making it difficult to distinguish the main elements from the background. The gilding of the background is also found on other examples of Sasanian metalwork, as in numbers 48-50.

48. *Bowl with Dionysiac Scene* 64.10

Silver, partially gilded

Sasanian period, 4th century, diam. 21.9 cm. ($8\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

The Bacchanalian scene with the triumph of Dionysus reflects the fusion of Western and Eastern themes. Two maenads with fluttering scarves pull a chariot in which Dionysus rides accompanied by Ariadne while Hercules follows on foot. The combination of male and female attributes on Greek gods is not unusual in the East and Dionysus appears here in the symbolic manifestation of an all-inclusive divinity.

- 49. *Vase with Four Female Figures*** 66.1
 Silver, partially gilded
 Sasanian period, 4th-5th century, height 18.8 cm. (7 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

Silver vases of this shape, decorated with female figures dancing, playing musical instruments, or holding various objects, are frequently encountered in Sasanian art. Two of the figures dance, one with clappers in her hand, while the others play either a horn or a pipe. These figures have been identified as being entertainers, participants in Dionysiac rites, or as the priestesses of Anahita.

- 50. *Vase with Three Figures*** 65.20
 Silver, partially gilded
 Sasanian period, 4th-5th century, height 18.0 cm. (7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

Similar in shape to the previous vase, this example is decorated with three figures separated by columns, on top of which are birds standing on acanthus leaves. The frontal figure represents Dionysus who holds a staff (thyrsus) and a panther on a leash. The other two figures are in profile: a youth receiving a child (symbolizing the Dionysiac initiation of children) and a maenad with a bunch of vegetation and another panther.

- 51. *Plate with a King Hunting*** 34.23
 Silver, partially gilded
 Sasanian period, 4th century, diam. 24.0 cm. (9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

The representation of kings hunting on silver plates is one of the most characteristic themes on Sasanian metalwork. The crown of the hunter here is similar to the one worn by Shapur II (A.D. 309-380). As is common on such plates, a variety of techniques were used, including repoussé, chasing, gilding, and soldering on units cast separately.

- 52. *Ewer*** 43.1
 Gold, chased and engraved
 Second half of 10th century, height 13.7 cm. (5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

The *kufic* inscription on the rim gives the name of Abu Mansur Bakhtiyar, a Buyid prince who reigned A.D. 967-977 in the provinces of Kirman, Khuzistan and Iraq. This unique ewer, belonging to a small group of inscribed Buyid objects, is the earliest datable piece of Islamic metalwork.

53. Bracelet with Quatrefoil Hinge 58.6

Gold

11th century, diam. 10.6 cm. ($4\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

The four gold dinars which form the bases of the large domes of the hinge bear the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Kadir (991-1031). These domes are decorated with gold beads and granulations, and are set with turquoise.

54. Bracelet 50.21

Gold, partially nielloed

12th century, length 19.7 cm. ($7\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The eight links of the bracelet are decorated on the inside with *kufic* script, animals, and arabesques set against a nielloed ground. The outside shows *naskhi* inscriptions and settings for jewels which are now lost.

55. Medal 43.8

Gold, chased

11th century, diam. 04.3 cm. ($1\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The subjects represented on this unique object, an enthroned ruler with attendants on the face and a rider on the reverse, are commonly found in the Seljuk period and can be traced to Sasanian times.

56. Bracelet 58.14

Gold

Late 10th or 11th century, diam. 09.7 cm. ($3\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

This beautifully executed ornament consists of cone-shaped projections covered by twisted wire and topped with gold beads (there are 66 such projections on the bracelet). At the fastening, four pairs of confronting peacocks appear. Bracelets with similar motifs exist in various collections and are assigned to the Buyid period.

57. Rosewater Bottle 50.5

Silver, partially gilded, chased and nielloed

12th century, height 24.9 cm. ($9\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

Cut-glass bottles of similar shape come from Gurgan where this example is said to have been found. The body is decorated with medallions containing animals and birds, worked from the outside by cutting the surface away.

58. Pen-box 36.7

Brass, inlaid with silver

Signed by Shadhi, dated 1210, 05.0 x 31.4 x 06.4 cm. ($2 \times 12\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

One of the rare signed and dated Persian metalwork executed prior to the Mongol invasion, the *kalamdan* (pen-box) has an inscription on the lid giving the

name of Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar, the commander of the defense of Merv and a governor of the Khwarazmshah Ala al-Din Muhammad. Around the lower part of the case the customary good wishes are written in animated *naskhi* with the date and name of the maker placed on the rim of the lid in *kufic*.

59. Candlestick 54.128

Bronze, inlaid with silver

12th-13th century, height 16.3 cm. ($6\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

The base of the nine-sided candlestick is decorated with medallions representing figures playing musical instruments and enthroned princes. The *kufic* inscription at the foot repeats the word "prosperity." This object belongs to a series of similar examples of metalwork with coarsely executed large silver inlays made around 1200.

60. Candlestick 51.17

Brass, repoussé and chased, inlaid with copper and silver

Second half of 12th century, height 40.3 cm. ($15\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

The presence of copper in inlaid metalwork indicates an early date. Ewers and candlesticks of this type are generally said to have been made in northwest Iran and Khorasan, or more specifically in Herat. The top and bottom sections of the base are decorated with three rows of seated lions while a series of bosses appear in the central portion.

61. Bowl 49.11

Brass, inlaid with gold and silver

Early 14th century, diam. 16.8 cm. ($6\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

The main body shows six inscribed cartouches alternating with medallions depicting riders. The inscriptions on the body and on the rim bestow good wishes on an anonymous Sultan.

62. Bucket 45.14

Bronze, inlaid with silver, inside partially gilded

Veneto-Islamic, mid-16th century, diam. 30.2 cm. ($11\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

Similar buckets appear in fifteenth and sixteenth-century miniatures depicting bath scenes in which they are used by the bathers for pouring water. Although made outside the Islamic world, the decorative motifs and inlay technique are based on Near Eastern models whose original provenance is given as Egypt, Syria, or Persia.

CERAMICS

The art of the Islamic world is perhaps best known through its ceramics, represented in all collections dealing with the Near

East, whether large or small. The techniques and designs used by the potters are almost unlimited since the Muslim artists delighted in endless experimentation with shapes, decorative motifs and glazes. Persia plays a most significant role in the development of Islamic pottery and the refined products of the Nishapur and Kashan workshops are rarely equaled elsewhere. It should be mentioned that the great ceramic tradition of the Far East has always held a fascination for the Muslims, and at different periods we see evidences of Islamic potters attempting to imitate the fine ceramics of China, either the purely white porcelains or the painted wares. Although Persian artists never succeeded in manufacturing true porcelain, the blue-and-white wares of the Safavid period closely resemble their Chinese models (no. 81).

It was in the eastern provinces that the first Persian and distinctively Islamic style made its appearance. Under the Samanids (A.D. 874-999) who ruled in Khorasan and Transoxiana, Nishapur was a major center, famous for its slip-painted wares decorated with geometric or floral motifs and meaningful or simulated inscriptions (nos. 63-65). Early sgraffiato and champlévé wares using monochrome or polychrome glazes were inspired by the incised and carved techniques of metalwork and decorated with animal motifs (nos. 66-68). This type, although found in various sites, is usually associated with the western regions, Aghkand and the Garrus district.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a great abundance of pottery was produced, displaying diverse techniques and a wide variety of decorative themes. Among the most characteristic types are the polychrome over-glazed wares, called *minai*, and the unique creation of the Islamic world, lusterwares. In the *minai* wares the art of painting is transferred to pottery, representing a vast repertoire of human figures, animals, floral and geometric arabesques, and at times narrative episodes (nos. 69-71). Lusterware, which uses silver or copper oxides in glazes to achieve deep golden or ruby-red reflections, reveals similar subjects (nos. 72-74). Wares painted in blue and black under clear or turquoise glazes have been generally assigned to Kashan, the great ceramic capital of Persia (nos. 75-78). Kashan workshops also excelled in *minai* and lusterwares, sharing their place in the history of Islamic ceramics with Rayy.

Aside from such common shapes as bowls, plates, beakers, and pitchers, zoomorphic forms were also produced as functional vessels (no. 75) or as ornamental sculpture (no. 80).

63. *Deep Bowl* 57.24

Slip-painted in brownish-black and dark-red

Transoxiana, 10th century, diam. 39.3 cm. (15½ in.)

Belonging to the type commonly referred to as Afrasiab or Samarkand ware found in Nishapur, the bowl is inscribed with proverbs and blessings in Arabic, the literary language of the period. Its decoration consists of an elegant script around the central medallion which provides a sophisticated contrast with the painted areas forming the background for the floral rinceau reserved in white.

64. *Deep Bowl* 56.1

Slip-painted in brownish-black

Transoxiana, 10th century, diam. 21.8 cm. (8⅝ in.)

Pertaining to the same group as the above bowl, the inscription on the bodies of the birds reads *baraka* (blessing). The bold execution of the motifs, related to the purely calligraphic decoration seen on other contemporary pieces from this area, reflects Far Eastern influences.

65. *Bowl* 53.70

Slip-painted in brownish-black

Transoxiana, 10th century, diam. 32.4 cm. (12¾ in.)

The knot design in the center and the festooned edge are painted in slip under a transparent glaze, typical of the wares from Transoxiana or eastern Persia.

66. *Plate* 27.2

Incised and painted with cream, purple, green and yellow glazes

12th-13th century, diam. 34.6 cm. (13⅝ in.)

Polychrome sgraffiato pottery from Azerbaijan, so-called Aghkand or Zinjan ware, is distinguished by its heraldic and powerful animal motifs. This plate which shows a dog holding a stag at bay set within a floral scroll, is one of the most dramatic examples of its type. In this technique the design is incised through the white slip with its lines preventing the glazes from running into the adjacent areas.

67. *Plate* 29.11

Carved and painted with green, dark-blue, purple, and white glazes

First half of 12th century, diam. 23.2 cm. (9⅛ in.)

This plate with a sphinx framed by a band in the center belongs to a group of wares called *lakabi*. The origin of this technique and style has produced much debate with specimens found in Rayy, Rakka, and in Fustat. Similar to the sgraffiato technique, the background is carved with the motifs standing in low relief.

68. *Large Plate* 61.21

Carved with dark-blue glaze

Mid-12th century, diam. 40.8 cm. (16 in.)

Characterizing monochrome carved wares, the plate represents a horseman with a sword against a floral scroll. Human figures are rare subjects for wares using this technique.

69. Bowl 38.12

Overglaze-painted in polychrome enamels and gold

Kashan, late 12th century, diam. 23.0 cm. (9 in.)

The *minai* bowl, painted in black, green, dark-red, dark-blue, purple, and gold over the glaze, depicts a man and a woman, the former playing a lyre while the latter holds a stemmed cup. The headdresses of the figures suggest that they are a royal couple. The patterns on the garments, showing arabesque motifs on the robe of the male and figural decoration on that of the female, are precisely drawn as are the hands and faces of the figures.

70. Beaker 28.2

Overglaze-painted in polychrome enamels

Rayy, early 13th century, height 12.0 cm. ($4\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

This singular piece is decorated with an episode from the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi, the story of Bihzan and Manizha. It is the earliest and most extensive representation of this subject and provides a source for the study of the initial stages of the development of Persian painting. The story is placed in three registers, each of which contains four scenes with the narrative moving from right to left, similar to the frieze-like structure seen in early fourteenth-century Persian manuscript illustrations.

71. Large Bowl 43.3

Overglaze-painted in polychrome enamels

Kashan, early 13th century, diam. 47.8 cm. ($18\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

The employment of the art of painting on pottery is clearly evident in this bowl which depicts an attack upon a fortress. Since a prototype for this theme is not known, the object may have been specially executed to commemorate a particular event, or copied from a larger composition, possibly a wall painting which is now lost. The names of some of the warriors are given but have not yet been identified either as literary or as historic personages.

72. Large Plate 57.21

Painted in golden luster

Rayy, mid-12th century, diam. 43.2 cm. (17 in.)

Representing a youthful horseman placed against a floral scroll, the background of the plate is painted in golden luster while the main theme and the enclosing arabesque are reserved in white.

73. *Pitcher* 69.27

Painted in deep-brown luster

Kashan, early 13th century, height 18.4 cm. (7¼ in.)

Using the same "reserve" technique as the above plate, the upper band of the body of the pitcher shows ducks against a deep-brown luster ground. The inscription on the lip is also reserved while the other areas are painted in luster on the white ground.

74. *Large Plate* 41.11

Painted in dark-brown luster

Signed by Sayyid Shams al-Din al-Hasani

Kashan, dated 1210, diam. 35.0 cm. (13⅞ in.)

The subject on the plate, interpreted as a groom falling asleep next to his horse and perhaps dreaming of a water nymph who entices him, does not correspond to any of the known themes commonly seen in the Islamic world. The 29 scallops of the cavetto appear in other plates of identical size, indicating that they were all made from the same mould.

75. *Double-shelled Ewer* 49.19

Painted in black under a turquoise glaze, touched with blue

Kashan, early 13th century, height 29.1 cm. (11½ in.)

The ewer with a pierced outer shell has a rooster-head and a tail-shaped handle. Although the object was found in Gurgan, the technique of execution and painting point to the Kashan workshops. There are other contemporary ewers from Kashan in this shape, several of which are pierced.

76. *Deep Bowl* 65.28

Underglazed-painted in blue and black

Kashan, early 13th century, diam. 21.5 cm. (8½ in.)

The radial design with floral panels alternating with inscribed units is related to dated pieces which appear in the first two decades of the thirteenth century. This plate with its relatively thin and hard body and clear glaze over the painting, is one of the finest technical achievements of the Persian potters.

77. *Bowl with an Enthroned Queen* 67.24

Painted in black and dark-blue under turquoise glaze

Kashan, early 13th century, diam. 20.3 cm. (8 in.)

The representation of a queen accompanied by two attendants is a unique theme for Islamic pottery. Figures with round faces, heavy chins and small mouths, and the all-over decoration of the background, garments and throne reflect the style identified with Kashan.

78. *Bowl with an Enthroned King* 67.25
 Painted in black and dark-blue under turquoise glaze
 Kashan, early 13th century, diam. 20.0 cm. (7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

The companion piece to the above bowl, this object shows a king attended by four servants. The composition, technique, and decorative motifs in both bowls suggest that they were conceived as a pair.

79. *Large Jar* 28.1
 Moulded with dark-blue glaze and touches of overglaze red painting and gilding
 Kashan, 13th century, height 65.4 cm. (25 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The exceptionally large jar is decorated in five registers with musicians on the neck, a row of animals on the shoulder, a wide frieze of polo players followed by a band of trees, animals, and figures, and terminated by a floral scroll. The technique and iconography of this object is unusual with only one other comparable example in existence. The traces of gold indicates that the jar might have been originally entirely gilded or rubbed with gold with only the high spots showing the blue glaze.

80. *Elephant* 67.26
 Painted in dark-blue under turquoise glaze
 Gurgan (?), first half of 13th century, height 22.9 cm. (9 in.)

Ceramic sculpture in the round is not very common in Islamic art. The few known sculptural pieces are either utilitarian, as vessels for liquids, or purely ornamental objects. There are several elephant figurines with litters in various collections, ranging from 8 to 13 inches in height.

81. *Large Plate* 70.23
 Underglaze-painted in blue and incised
 Kirman, late 17th-early 18th century, diam. 45.3 cm. (17 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

The influences of Chinese porcelain on Islamic pottery is clearly evident in this plate not only in the decorative motifs but also in technique. The cobalt-blue painted central medallion, depicting a woman in landscape, is enclosed by a band incised with a floral pattern. The landscape features with free and sketchy drawing, and stylized floral motifs reveal that they were inspired by landscapes found on late Ming wares.

ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION

One important aspect of Islamic art which cannot be sufficiently represented in museums is architectural decoration. Completely adorned facades, vaults, domes, and walls, richly embellished portals, windows and prayer niches can usually be seen as fragments, their full impact comprehended only by visiting the actual

buildings. The combination of diverse techniques and materials within one structure such as stucco reliefs, carved stones, ingeniously patterned brickwork, glazed tiles, woodwork, and painted panels produces a dazzling effect.

The two pieces exhibited reflect some of the features of this great tradition. The pediment from the Caucasus displays the motifs common throughout the Seljuk period (no. 82), and the building record from Meshhed exemplifies the uniquely Islamic concept of employing writing for both the decoration of the surfaces and for significant messages (no. 83).

82. *Window Pediment* 36.5

Gray limestone carved in high relief

Daghestan, 12th-13th century, 78.5 x 132.0 cm. (30 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 52 in.)

This pediment from a secular building is adorned with two lions surrounded by a frieze of animals including an antelope, griffin, lion, sphinx, and stag. Several pediments were found in the villages of Kubatchi in the Daghestan province of the Caucasus, whose representational style is similar to this piece. The theme of placing animals against a floral scroll fits into the common vocabulary of Islamic art of the period.

83. *Building Record from the Shrine of Imam Riza* 48.16

Carved stone

Made by Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Asid (or Usaid)

Meshhed, dated 1154-55, 92.5 x 67.6 cm. (36 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 26 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

The plaque, one of the oldest Islamic building inscriptions, is carved in the form of a *mihrab* and decorated with *kufic* and *naskhi* inscriptions containing Koranic verses and prayers to the Shiite imams. The dedicatory section in the trilobed panel in the center states that the shrine of Ali b. Musa al-Riza (the eighth imam who died in Meshhed in A.D. 818) was constructed by Junayd b. Ammar and gives the date and the name of the artist.

1

 بِفَضْلِهِ أَمْرًا لِّلْوَاحِدَةِ خَلِيقِ الْخَلْقِ وَفِيهِ
 أَمْرًا لِّلْأَسْمَاءِ كَمَوْفَلِهِمْ مَذْبُوحًا لِّبَيْتِهِ
 فَعَلَوْهُ فِي الْوَقْتِ خَلِيقِ الْخَلْقِ وَفِيهِمْ مَذْبُوحًا
 الْمَعْنَى فِي خَاتَمِ تَقْدِيرِهِمْ فَعَلَوْهُ فِي خَاتَمِ

2

6

5

مستوف و مستوف

پول

خام هفت کر در چ و ده
شیرین شانی سر
در برت باقی و ده
دوبت و در زلف پیت
نکای پشاش توپا سا
نیم سیم باقی و ده
نار و صبر و ده

کمال بر هفت کر در چ و ده
سور و یک کر در چ و ده
زنگار و هفت کر در چ و ده
کرم و یک کر در چ و ده
نار و صبر و ده
زغال و یک کر در چ و ده
نار و صبر و ده

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در اقله صفای خاک و پختن

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وميثاق خدای وسنت یغافر وسیرت این د و خلیفه عثمان کت بذیر فتم عبدالرحمن دستات که از بهر علی ایامه بود بر شکران
از وسعت کرد با وی کت ازل الله لکن فیما ارضاه لکن خلق رضاستند وسعت کرد بد علی عبدالرحمن را انشا خدعه وای خدعه

کمر جو کمان غنچ برین مدام از نهان بی کسیه
نمودی بجای زلف آن بخت بادا در بر خواندند آفرین
غنائش کرد کار سیم باد و بحر هم آفرین
مورارام شد با تو خوشه عالم را خال که خبر زمین

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کر که این سخن گفتن
باز سوخت کمال و کمال
بسیار که خود را کمال کرده
خدا را بکشید و زود است
نخستین ساز و کلام عالم
چهار بیت قیاسی است
بازان اصل را شنیدند

بر خفا شک از صبح
سیر بر داد و داد و داد
سوی این زمین را کمال کرده
بازان سرایان و سوس
سوی آن خفته را کمال کرده
خود روی بک کمال است
دران سکنی است

در این کس که او را پنداشت
نخواست بر خفا شک از صبح
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است و این را که او را پنداشت
سیاهان و این را که او را پنداشت
دو سال را یک سال کرد
ستودان را یک سال کرد
سیاهان و این را که او را پنداشت
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چرخ روان یکیشی
شمار این پیوسته ایست
کشتی آن سپید روی

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